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NEWSBYTES

Enlisted to honor Peters

WASHINGTON – Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Jim Finch surprised Secretary of the Air Force Whit Peters Aug. 7 with an invitation to be inducted into the Air Force Order of the Sword. The induction ceremony will be Dec. 16 at Andrews Air Force Base, Md.

According to CMSAF Finch, the Order of the Sword is the highest honor Air Force enlisted members can bestow upon their leaders. Induction is limited to those leaders held in the highest regard by Air Force enlisted men and women.

NMD near completion

WASHINGTON – A study assessing the development of a National Missile Defense system is near completion; however a number of difficult issues remain to be resolved, said Defense Secretary William S. Cohen, in a statement Aug. 8.

"I will make no recommendation about the future of the NMD program until I have analyzed their findings," he said. "My goal is to make the best possible recommendation based on the president's four criteria, not the earliest possible recommendation."

The secretary expects the study to be completed within the next few weeks.

Strike averted

INCIRLIK AIR BASE, Turkey – A collective labor agreement between the U.S. government and Turkish base employees averted the possibility of a labor strike by members of the Harb-Is union.

Both sides signed the agreement July 24, ending any possibility of a strike similar to one at U.S. bases in Turkey two years ago. A formal signing ceremony was held July 27 in Ankara, Turkey.

AF gives contest winner chance of a lifetime

By 1st Lt. Lars Anderson
AF Public Affairs Media Outreach Office

JUNCTION CITY, ORE. – It's almost like winning the lottery or being the top contestant on a high-stakes television quiz show. The difference is that even with those millions you still can't buy what Dale Zimmerman will do later this month when he gets his "dream come true" — a flight in an Air Force F-15D Eagle.

Mr. Zimmerman, of Junction City, Ore., is the Air Force winner of the Yahoo! Fantasy Careers in Today's Military contest.

The contest, which ran May 20 - July 4, invited eligible U.S. candidates to register on Yahoo!, submit a resume, and write a short essay on one or all of the military fantasy

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Dale Zimmerman will embark on a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity as the Air Force's winner of the Yahoo! Military Fantasy Job contest. He will fly in an F-15D Eagle during a visit to Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla. Aug. 23-25. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Angela Stafford)

Assessment data links leadership to satisfaction

By Staff Sgt. Cynthia Miller
Headquarters United States Air Force

WASHINGTON – For the first time in its seven-year history, Community Needs Assessment Survey data links leadership with satisfaction in the Air Force way of life, Air Force officials said.

Commanders play a significant role in influencing family satisfaction with Air Force life, according to the 1999-2000 Air Force Community Needs Assessment survey, conducted October through November 1999.

"This assessment provides data linking

leadership support with satisfaction," said Col. John Nelson, Air Force Surgeon General's chief of family advocacy division. "As members report higher support from their leaders, given the demands and operations tempo today, satisfaction with the Air Force way of life increases significantly."

The survey, used to take the pulse of the Air Force community regarding many family and community issues, was conducted at 81 bases with 170,000 service members and their spouses responding. The Air Force-wide response rate was 55 percent for ac-

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Letters to the editor

U.S. Air Force Online News publishes letters based on their appeal to an Air Force-wide audience each week. Send your letter to the U.S. Air Force Online News staff by completing the online form at <http://www.af.mil/newspaper/> Due to the number of letters, not all can be published. Letters may be edited for grammar and length. Only letters accompanied by a valid name and email address will be considered.

Appreciate liberties of being a citizen

By Senior Master Sgt. Allen Niksich
Air Combat Command

June 22 is a day I won't soon forget. Because I was late for a court date, I got my first parking ticket that day. It cost me \$20.

On the other hand, that's also a day Senior Airman Monica Gomez-Arenas will never forget. That's the day she became an American citizen.

You would think Airman Gomez-Arenas' day was much better than mine, but allow me to tell you why that 20 bucks was worth giving up. In Salt Lake City Federal Court, during a swearing in ceremony for new U.S. citizens, I got to hear testimony from 95 people who told a judge and a packed court room who they were and where they were from, and then talked about becoming an American citizen.

I listened as a man from Iraq stood and told us about his long and hard journey to cross the Iraqi border and his willingness to fight and die for his new country. We heard two women (one from France, the other from Canada) speak of their excitement to vote for American leadership. To the enjoyment of all present, the lady from France explained her disappointment when her husband voted for Ross Perot.

One after another, they told their stories. Ecuador, Japan, Iran, Mexico, Russia and Bosnia were all represented, as was Ghana, where the oldest new citizen, an 85-year-old woman, shed tears as she accepted her new status.

Common statements involved opportunity, freedom, liberties, and the chance to be accepted by their neighbors and communities. They spoke of the desire to vote and devote themselves to the country that opened her arms to their families when their own country did not. They came from Samoa,

Nigeria, Chile, China, Ukraine and Bolivia. A man from India said it better than any American-born citizen: "No matter where we came from, we all came to a better place." His son is starting law school at Georgetown University this fall.

Then the microphone was passed to Airman Gomez-Arenas, a member of the 388th Maintenance Squadron. Sharply suited in her service dress uniform, she stood and said, "My name is Monica Gomez-Arenas and I am from Colombia. I am in the United States Air Force and I'm very proud of that." The courtroom erupted in applause. Standing in the back of the courtroom in my military uniform, I thought to myself, "I'm proud of you, too, Senior Airman Gomez-Arenas."

Finally, all were sworn in as new citizens with the following oath of allegiance:

I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state or sovereignty, of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen; that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform noncombatant

service in the armed forces of the United States when required by law; that I will perform work of national importance under civilian direction when required by the law; and that I take this obligation freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion: So help me God.

Following the oath, they were each called to the bench to receive their certificates announcing they were a citizen of the United States of America, and court was adjourned.

I can only hope that, from time to time, we all take time to appreciate the freedom, liberties and opportunities to which we as American citizens are entitled. It's hard to appreciate what we've always had, but we need to educate ourselves on how different our lives could be in another country under a different government. I know my opportunity on June 22 made me feel prouder to wear the uniform I've worn for 22 years to serve and protect American citizens.

Congratulations, Airman Gomez-Arenas, and thank you for serving your country.

Sergeant Niksich is the 388th Maintenance Squadron first sergeant at Hill Air Force Base, Utah.

Due to technical problems encountered during submissions, the letters to the editor column will not appear this week. It is expected to resume Aug. 16.



High promotion rate equals good news

WASHINGTON — This year's record-setting E-5 promotion rate brings more airmen into the NCO ranks earlier, which Air Force officials say will aid retention and put the Air Force more in line with the other services' average sew-on times.

"This year's promotion rate of 51 percent brings the Air Force closer to the other services' average sew-on times," said Lt. Col. Nellie Riley, chief, promotions and evaluations branch at the air staff.

The Air Force averages 6.6 years, with the other services leading with an average of 4.2 years for the Army; 5.2 for the Navy and 4.4 for the Marines.

Colonel Riley said this year's selection rate to staff sergeant reflects the service's return to a stable force structure and end-strength levels following years of draw down and is good news on the retention front.

"We need to remember that these are the folks who won the Kosovo air war ... went to Africa and saved lives and are supporting 'real' combat in SWA (Southwest Asia) every day. They are performing above their rank every day ... now we will begin to recognize the responsibility they have had by promoting them," said Brig. Gen. Mike McMahan, director, Personnel Force Management at the air staff.

With the increased promotion rates and lower time in service and time in grade levels, there has been a drop in Promotion Fitness Exam scores.

In 1996, the average PFE score was just over 56, according to Air Force officials. It



Senior Airmen Elaine Tarello, from Army and Air Force Hometown News, and Christian Reyes, Air Force News Service broadcast maintenance technician, Kelly Air Force Base, Texas, are two of the nearly 20,000 airmen selected for promotion to E-5. (Photo by Senior Airman Oshawn Jefferson)

climbed to 73 in 1998 but dropped to 49 this year. PFE and SKT tests competitiveness among peers, with PFE focusing on subjects such as Air Force history and customs and courtesies, whereas SKT covers job knowledge and experience, Colonel Riley said.

"As supervisors and commanders, we need to ensure our people understand the importance of PFE in the development of a well-rounded NCO," she said. "We must also remember the 5-level shortage we've been faced with, combined with the hectic operations tempo over the past five to 10 years, has made our senior airmen work hard."

This article is available in its entirety online.

Command selection process changes increase eligibility, flexibility

WASHINGTON — Changes to how wing and group commanders are selected will add flexibility to the process while increasing the pool of eligible candidates. The changes, approved by Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Michael E. Ryan, will be in place for the next command selection cycle, which begins Sept. 5.

The changes are the result of a study to determine what changes were needed to ensure the CSP met its goal of broadening and simplifying the selection process.

"Even though the CSP has leveled the playing field and, more importantly, earned the trust of the colonel force, mid-course corrections are still appropriate to improve the way we select commanders," said Col. Greg Patterson, Air Force Colonel Matters Office at the Pentagon.

All line colonels and colonel-selects with less than 24 years of total active federal commissioned service are eligible, as of Jan. 1 of the assignment year, to compete for group commands, according to Colonel Patterson. Colonels with less than 26 years TAFCS, as of Jan. 1 of the assignment year, are now eligible to compete for wing commands.

This article is available in its entirety online.



Assessment data links leadership to satisfaction

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active duty, 25 percent for spouses and 38 percent overall.

Survey data revealed 66 percent of active-duty airmen work more than 40 hours per week, with nearly one in five officers regularly working a 12-hour day. Data also revealed one in 10 active duty members hold a second job.

Additionally, survey results indicate 70 percent of spouses are employed and 50 percent of those working spouses have children under age 2. The majority of unemployed spouses choose not to be employed.

The survey reports 44 percent of all active duty airmen would elect to stay in service until retirement, a 4 percent drop since the last assessment in 1988. While 55 percent of married members would opt to stay, 62 percent of their spouses favor members staying to retirement.

The survey also revealed job demands had greater impact on family responsibilities than on duty performance; however, overall community satisfaction was high, not only with active-duty people, but with spouses as well.

"What's interesting here is that, despite the effect of ops tempo on members and their

families, the overall sense of community remains," Colonel Nelson said. "Given those demands, it appears that both commitment to the Air Force (and) its way of life and the overall sense of community across Air Force installations remain strong."

Since 1993, the Air Force Community Needs Assessment survey has been used to design new services and improve existing programs. Community agencies use survey information to adjust their programs to the changing needs of the local population.

This article is available in its entirety online.



AF gives contest winner chance of a lifetime

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careers through the Career Track web site. Overall, more than 3,300 essays were submitted.

"This contest is about the public meeting military service members, getting to know who they are, and experiencing firsthand their maturity, dedication and professionalism," said Navy Cmdr. Yvette Brown-Wahler, the Defense Department's assistant director for recruiting plans. "This is a way for ordinary people from Main Street USA to connect with extraordinary people doing exciting, thrilling and challenging jobs while serving their country."

The 22-year-old winner travels to Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., Aug. 23 - 25 for his flight. In addition, he will get a chance to meet with aircraft mechanics and watch a military work dog demonstration as part of an orientation on the Air Force. "I was about to pass out," Mr. Zimmerman said when he learned he had won the contest. "It is a dream come true." He said he'd almost forgotten entering his essay after spotting the contest on the Air Force recruiting web site.

Lieutenant Col. Jerry Kerby, 325th Operations Support Squadron weapons and training flight commander at Tyndall, will be Mr. Zimmerman's pilot during the orientation flight.

I'm excited about doing this because I get to show others what a great life we have in the Air Force," Colonel Kerby said. "It's not just flying jets; it's working side-by-side with men and women who have dedicated their lives to serving our great nation. You just don't get this working a nine-to-five job."

This article is available in its entirety online.

AF 'paperless' asset tracking system more user-friendly

By Staff Sgt. A.J. Bosker
Headquarters United States Air Force

WASHINGTON – The Air Force's Standard Asset Tracking System creates a "paperless" warehouse and provides better service to supply customers, according to logistics management specialist Trent Darling, Supply and Fuels Policy and Procedures Division, Installations and Logistics Directorate, air staff.

Since its introduction, SATS has reduced supply paperwork by 96 percent, according to Mr. Darling. By providing a more user-friendly interface, supply personnel can now research customer queries in approximately three to five minutes – an improvement over the previous method which could take up to an hour.

The system has enabled the Air Force to reduce the amount of time required to stock

assets upon their receipt by 77 percent and reduce the amount of time it takes to then issue that asset to a customer by 81 percent, he said. It has also resulted in a 79 percent reduction in the amount of auditable documents that needed to be filed at document control.

Functioning as the front-end to the legacy Standard Base Supply System, SATS automates the input of SBSS transactions, processes supply forms and performs data collection of asset storing and issuing information, according to Mr. Pete Ramirez, SATS program manager, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. It also tracks all assets in base supply from the time the material enters receiving through storage, issue and delivery to the customer.

This article is available in its entirety online.

Dyess AFB hosts AEF conference

By Capt. Wilson Camelo
Air Combat Command Public Affairs

LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va. (ACCNS) — Even as Aerospace Expeditionary Forces 9 and 10 prepare for their deployment vulnerability window, pre-planning for AEFs 1 and 2 is already being scheduled.

The pre-planning will take place at a conference Aug. 30-31 at Dyess AFB, Texas.

And pre-planning, said the commander of the Air Force's AEF Center here, is the key to ensuring the Expeditionary Aerospace Force concept keeps with its goal of providing predictability and stability to Air Force people.

The commander, Brig. Gen. Denny Larsen, said AEFs 1 and 2 will mark the first AEF pairs in which people were notified 120

days in advance that they will be deployed during the period that runs December through March 2001.

"The 120-days deployment notice mark was our goal. We're very pleased to have reached it this soon. That means people now know 15 months ahead of time that they're assigned to a particular AEF, and 120 days ahead of time that they've actually been identified to deploy," General Larsen said.

People in AEFs 9 and 10 were given approximately 75 days notice.

Dyess AFB was chosen to host the conference because the 7th Bomb Wing is the lead wing for AEF 2. AEF 1's lead wing is the 388th Fighter Wing at Hill AFB, Utah.

This article is available in its entirety online.



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